THE

Maſsachusetts

MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

No. 12. MAY, 1806. Vol. III.

MRS. DENNY'S DIARY.

(*Continued from p.* 404.)

JAN. 1, 1769. THIS being the Lord's day, alſo the firſt day of the year, O may I draw near to God with holy reverence, and be deeply humbled before him for the many backſlidings I have been guilty of, the paſt year. If thou ſhouldſt be ſtrict to mark iniquity againſt me, I could not ſtand before thee. O how have I loved the world and the vanities of it! How inordinate is my love to the creature, and how little love for my Creator. O my God; but how dare I ſay *my* God? Humble me for my many ſins, and for thy dear Son's ſake freely pardon them. Grant to thy handmaid a truly thankful heart, for the innumerable mercies, I and mine have been favoured with the year paſt. While many others have been brought to great ſtraits, and difficulties, reſpecting the comforts of life, I and mine have had to the full. This is not that we have deſerved more than others. Give me grace, O gracious God, to begin the year with thee, and if thou ſhouldſt be pleaſed to ſpare my life this year alſo, grant that I may bring forth more fruit to thy praiſe.

This day have I heard of the death of my Siſter Henſhaw. O how ſudden, and ſurpriſing! How little did I expect ſuch news when I was writing the above. That news was ſounded in my ears, "ſhe has gone, and gone in a moment, down to the ſilent chambers of death." She was I truſt permitted to draw a few breaths in the new year. O that it might be an effectual warning to me, and to us all to be ready. Bleſſed God, may every diſpenſation of thy providence towards me, whether merciful or afflictive, work together for my everlaſting good.

July 2, 1769. This night God is pleaſed in his holy providence to viſit us with a moſt awful ſtorm of thunder and lightning. It is the moſt dreadful night I ever ſaw. The heavens have been ſeemingly in a blaze over us, and the thunder breaking all around us, and we as it were waiting to ſee which would be ſtruck firſt. But we are all yet ſpared monuments of divine mercy. Bleſſed God, ſuffer us not to be forgetful of thy mercies, but let thy judgments drive us and thy loving kindneſs draw us to thee.

October 8, 1770. I am now brought by the goodneſs of my God to the firſt day of another year of my life, and muſt lament before him my many backſlidings. O how little do I grow in grace! I ſeem not to bring forth the fruit of a walk with God. O my God, let me plead with thee for the quickening, ſanctifying influences of thy Holy Spirit. Bring me off from every falſe bottom. Enable me to renounce all ſelf righteouſneſs, and to rely wholly on Chriſt. Lord, thou art able to build up thy handmaid in faith and hope. Let me not be deceived with a falſe hope, that ſhall make me aſhamed. Let me not be forgetful to praiſe thee for the mercies of the paſt year. Bleſſed be my God that he has continued me to my family, and them to me, while many parents around me have been taken from their children, and children from their parents. O let the goodneſs of God lead us to repentance. May we love the Lord our God in ſincerity, and in truth. Now thy judgments are abroad in the earth, may the inhabitants of it learn righteouſneſs.

July 22, 1771. O God, how hard do I find my heart, how attached to the world, how dead to every thing that is good! Deeply humble me for my ſins, and ſtir me up to my duty. Shed abroad in my ſoul a double portion of thy Holy Spirit, and enable me to walk the way of righteouſneſs with delight. The many cares and incumbrances of this life, which are growing daily upon me, take off my mind from thee. I neither hear nor read thy word as I would, neither do I retain it. O thou infinite Jehovah, pardon my ſins, and accept me for thy dear Son's ſake. Enable me by thy grace to long more after thee. Let the breathing of my ſoul be after thee, the living God. I can find no happineſs in any created being without thee. What is the world without thee! Huſband, children and friends are near and dear to me. But what are they without thee? O my God, let me have thy preſence and bleſſing. Let me reſolve not to be content in any thing ſhort of thee. After a ſtrict examination of myſelf, I think there is nothing I ſo earneſtly deſire at the throne of grace, as a heart to love God and hold cloſe communion with him. Gracious God, deny me what worldly comfort thou pleaſeſt, only grant me reſignation to thy will.

will. Deny me not thy gracious and fatherly preſence, which is better than life itſelf.

October 17, 1774. God has been pleaſed to remove from me my honoured mother by death. O my God, may this diſpenſation of thy holy hand quicken me in my duty, and prepare me for my own change. Make me truly thankful that thou didſt continue her ſo long to us. A bleſſing ſhe was indeed, a friend to the ſouls of her children and to the world. O my God, enable me to follow her pious example ſo far as ſhe followed Chriſt. Make me ſubmiſſive to thy will: and while I mourn my loſs, let me bleſs thy name, that although my loſs is great I have reaſon to think her gain is much greater. Bleſſed be the name of my God, although a dear mother is taken away, yet *he* changeth not, and is able to anſwer all her prayers which ſhe has put up for her children. And God grant that it might be ſo.

Sabbath night, Nov. 1774. If God ſhould ſee meet to ſpare my life to another Sabbath I expect to commemorate my Saviour's death at his table. O my God, how earneſtly do I deſire thy bleſſing and preſence with me this week, to enable me to examine myſelf. Search me, O God, and try me. Enable me to humble and abaſe myſelf, that thou mayeſt be exalted. I know I can do nothing of myſelf, but thy grace is ſufficient for me. O make it efficient in me. If thou ſee fit to bring me to that bleſſed day and hour, make me a welcome gueſt, if it may be thy bleſſed will.

(The following is without date. It was probably written on the ſucceeding Sabbath after communion.)

Bleſſed God, haſt thou permitted me to go to thine houſe, and ſit down at thy table? O may I wonder, and ſtill wonder at the condeſcenſion of that Majeſty Divine, that he ſhould permit ſuch worthleſs creatures to ſit down with him at his table. Wonderful are thy works of creation and providence, but much more wonderful are thy works of redemption, that God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, ſhould die for ſinful mortals. O that my mind may be deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of it. O that I might be enabled to crucify my ſins, which crucified my Saviour. Why, my ſoul, no more affected with thy Savour's ſufferings and thy own ſins! Enable me, O God, to keep this world under my feet, and to make thee all and in all.

March 16, 1775. As this day is ſet apart for faſting and prayer, may I upon the bended knees of my ſoul renew my covenant with God. O may I be ſincere in my poor endeavours to ſerve God this day. Bleſſed be his name, he is ſtriving with me by his Holy Spirit to bring me out of this dead lethargy, which I have been ſo long lamenting. It is by his grace and goodneſs only that I am now enabled to write. Eternal

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and ever bleſſed God, I deſire to preſent myſelf before thee with the deepeſt humiliation and abaſement of ſoul, ſenſible how unworthy ſuch a ſinful worm is to appear before the holy Majeſty of heaven and earth, and eſpecially on ſuch an errand as this, to renew covenant with thee. But the ſcheme is thine own. Thine own infinite condeſcenſion hath made the propoſal, and inclined my heart to accept of it. I come, therefore, O my God, acknowledging that I have greatly offended. I would ſmite upon my breaſt and cry, *God be merciful to me a ſinner.* I come in the name of thy Son, and wholly truſting in his perfect righteouſneſs, entreating that for his ſake thou wouldſt be merciful to my unrighteouſneſs, and no more remember my ſins. Receive I beſeech thee thy revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to me, and who deſires nothing ſo much as to be thine. This day I do with the utmoſt ſolemnity, and I would hope with the greateſt ſincerity, ſurrender myſelf to thee. I renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me, and I conſecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly poſſeſſions, my time, and my influence over them, to be all and entirely for thy glory, and employed in obedience to thy commands, ſo long as thou continueſt me in life, with an ardent deſire and humble reſolution to continue thine through all the endleſs ages of eternity; ever holding myſelf in an attentive poſture to obey the firſt intimations of thy will, and ready to ſpring forward with zeal and joy to the immediate execution of it. But, O thou Majeſty Divine, ſenſible of my own weakneſs and inability to perform any good thing, or to keep any holy reſolutions, I look to thee for ſtrength. O may I derive it from thee. May I be ſtriving after farther attainments, and be enabled to perſevere to the end. To thy direction I reſign myſelf and all that I have, to be diſpoſed of by thee in ſuch a manner as thou ſhalt in thine infinite wiſdom judge moſt ſubſervient to the purpoſes of thy glory. To thee I leave the management of all events, and ſay, without reſerve, "Not my will, but thine be done." I rejoice with a loyal heart in thy unlimited government, as what ought to be the delight of the whole rational creation. Uſe me, I beſeech thee, in thy ſervice. Number me among thy peculiar people. Let me be waſhed in the blood of thy dear Son. Let me be clothed with his righteouſneſs. Let me be ſanctified by his Spirit, and let my life be conformable to his commands. Impart to me through him all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit, and let my life be ſpent under thoſe influences and in the enjoyment of the light of thy countenance, as my Father and my God. And when the ſolemn hour of death ſhall come, may I remember this thy covenant, well ordered in all things and ſure,

ject to become acquainted with truth. And ſince ſuch errors cannot be criminal and diſpleaſing in the ſight of God, their fruits, or the practices, which reſult from them, cannot be criminal and diſpleaſing in his ſight. But admitting that errors in ſentiment, and the practices, which reſult from them, are not entirely blameleſs, yet they cannot be criminal in any conſiderable degree. All ſuch errors are imputable to the weakneſs and frailty of human nature. God, the father of mercies, who remembers that we are duſt; who knows the feebleneſs of our frame, and who pities our weakneſs, will not behold our wanderings, which reſult from ignorance, with an eye of angry diſpleaſure. He ſurely will not be ſtrict to mark them againſt us; nor can we believe that he will puniſh us for them."

Such is the ſubſtance of the plea, made by many, for thoſe errors in ſentiment and practice, which reſult from ignorance. And to give this plea a greater weight, an appeal is not unfrequently made to ſcripture authority, and particularly to the following paſſage, "as he (man) thinketh in his heart, ſo is he." If a man think himſelf to be right in ſentiment, in practice, he really is ſo. It is alſo plead, that conſcience is placed in the ſoul as a judge of right and wrong; and therefore, if conſcience do not condemn us for our errors committed through ignorance, ſo neither will God, the author of conſcience, condemn us.

How many, from conſiderations like thoſe above ſtated, quiet their minds, ſtupify conſcience, and cry peace and ſafety, when deſtruction is but juſt before them!

That error in ſentiment and practice, ariſing from ignorance, is far from being the blameleſs thing, as above ſuppoſed; but that it is inexcuſably criminal, of extremely dangerous tendency, and frequently deſtructive in its conſequences, will be evinced, it is believed, from the following conſiderations.

1. God requires his rational creatures to believe the truth, as revealed in the Bible, and to practiſe in conformity to it. But in doing this, is it to be ſuppoſed that he leaves it optionable with them, whether to believe the truth, as he has ſtated it, and according to its true import, or to believe ſomething elſe inſtead of this to be the truth which he has revealed? This ſurely may not be admitted. God, in requiring us to believe the truth, as contained in his word, requires us to believe it according to its true and real meaning; nor, indeed, is it poſſible *really* to believe the truth in any other way. And as he requires us thus to believe, ſo he requires us to regulate our conduct according to this belief. The ſcriptures of truth are full of meaning, and this meaning is definite and preciſe. Hence it appears, that it is not ſufficient that we give a general aſſent to theſe ſcriptures, as true, while we remain ignorant of the nature and import of their contents. This does not anſwer to

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my polluted lips. But thou art graciouſly allowing ſinful duſt and aſhes thus to do. Thou haſt brought me out of darkneſs into marvellous light. In the midſt of perplexing fears thou didſt enable me to acquieſce in thy will. Thou haſt done great things for me, and bleſſed be thy name. The Captain of my ſalvation came forth to my help. He girded me with ſtrength, and vanquiſhed my enemies. Sing praiſes unto the Lord that dwelleth in Zion. He has not forgot the cry of the humble. The Lord is righteous, and all his works are done in truth. Who is like unto thee, who delivereſt the poor from him who is too ſtrong for him. Thy mercy O Lord is in the heavens, and thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds. Sing praiſes unto God. Sing praiſes, ſing praiſes unto our King. The Lord of hoſts is with me. The God of Jacob is my refuge. Bleſs the Lord, all ye his angels, that excel in ſtrength. Bleſs the Lord, all ye his ſaints. Bleſs the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominions. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul. Hallelujah.

A DISQUISITION

ON THE NINETEENTH VERSE OF THE NINTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS.

Thou wilt ſay then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath reſiſted his will?

THIS is the moſt plauſible and the moſt common objection, that ever has been made againſt the divine agency in the production of moral exerciſes in the human heart. Thoſe who *deny*, that God operates immediately upon the hearts of either ſaints or ſinners, rely upon this objection to ſupport their opinion. Thoſe who *allow*, that God ſoftens the hearts of ſome, and hardens the hearts of others, inſtantly fly to this objection, to excuſe them for not loving, and even for actually hating God. The careleſs and ſecure urge this objection, to excuſe their careleſſneſs and ſecurity; and the awakened and impreſſed urge this objection to excuſe their obſtinacy and unbelief. All claſſes of ſinners conſider this objection as their ſtrong hold, to which they can always retreat as their laſt and ſafe reſort. It is of great importance, therefore, fairly and fully to remove this objection againſt the doctrine of divine efficiency, which is ſo reproachful to God, and ſo injurious to thoſe who make it. But ſince the whole force of this objection lies in its ambiguity, it is neceſſary, in the firſt place, to explain it with accuracy and preciſion.

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To ascertain the true import of this objection, let us look back to the connexion in which it is introduced. The apostle had been speaking of God's conduct in calling in the Gentiles and rejecting the Jews; and had represented him as bringing about this event, by *softening* the hearts of believers, and *hardening* the hearts of unbelievers. To illustrate this point, he mentions the instance of Pharaoh. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he *hardeneth*." Having thus plainly asserted God's immediate agency in *softening* the hearts of saints, and in *hardening* the hearts of sinners, he introduced the strongest objection, which he supposed any one could possibly make against the doctrine he had taught. "Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?"

This is as much as to say, that if God does indeed harden the hearts of sinners, then he COMPELS them to be hardened, and they cannot help being what they are; which is totally inconsistent with any criminality on their part. Here it is necessary to form a clear and just idea of *compulsion*. This implies two things, *constraint*, and *restraint*. A man is *compelled* to act, when he is *constrained* to act contrary to his will. Daniel was *compelled* to go into the den of lions, because he was *constrained* to go in, contrary to his will; and Joseph was *compelled* to go into Egypt, because he was *constrained* to go there, contrary to his will. In all cases of *constraint*, there is *compulsion*; because the *will* of the person constrained is opposed to the power that constrains him. But a man may be *compelled* by *restraint* as well as by *constraint*. Thus Jeroboam was *compelled* to let the prophet go, when his withered hand effectually *restrained* him from acting agreeably to his will. Paul and Silas were likewise *compelled* to stay in the prison, so long as their feet were made fast in the stocks, which, contrary to their will, *restrained* them from walking. In every instance of *restraint*, there is *compulsion*; because the *will* of the person restrained is opposed to the power that restrains him. It is now easy to see, that no man can be said to be *compelled* in any case, unless he is either *constrained*, or *restrained*, contrary to his will. This is the only proper meaning of COMPULSION; and this is precisely what the objector means by asking, "Who hath resisted

reſiſted his will ?" He ſuppoſes, that ſinners may endeavour to reſiſt the will of God, while he is hardening their hearts, but notwithſtanding all their endeavours, they are *compelled* to be hardened. And do not thoſe, who make this objection at the preſent day, mean the ſame thing by it ? When they aſk, how can we be to blame, if God hardens our hearts ? Do they not mean to aſk, how can we be to blame for the hardneſs of our hearts, if God *compels* us to be hardened contrary to our will ? Do they not mean to ſay, that the act of God in hardening their hearts muſt be an act of *compulſion*, by which he either *reſtrains* them from being what they *wiſh* to be, or *conſtrains* them to be what they *do not wiſh* to be ? It is undoubtedly true, that every perſon, who objects againſt God's hardening the hearts of ſinners, objects againſt it as implying the exerciſe of compulſion on God's part. He muſt mean to complain of compulſion in this caſe, becauſe this is the only ground of objection, and a ſolid ground, if it be true Who ever felt himſelf to blame for doing what he was *conſtrained* to do, contrary to his will ? Or who ever felt himſelf to blame for *not doing* what he was *reſtrained* from doing contrary to his will ? Did a good man ever blame himſelf for not attending public worſhip, when he was *reſtrained* from attending, contrary to his will ? Or did a martyr ever blame himſelf for going to the ſtake, when he was conſtrained to go, contrary to his will ? No ſuch caſe ever happened. Compulſion is always inconſiſtent with blame. Thoſe, who object againſt God's hardening the hearts of men, mean to make a reaſonable, ſolid, unanſwerable objection ; and, therefore, they mean to ſay, that, if God does harden their hearts, he *compels* them to be hardened. This is ſaying ſomething pertinent and forcible ; for if it be true, that God does exerciſe *compulſion* in hardening the heart, then there is good reaſon to aſk, " Why doth he yet find fault ? For who hath reſiſted his will ?"

The way is now prepared to inquire, whether there is any juſt ground for this objection againſt the divine agency in hardening the hearts of ſinners. Certainly there is not the leaſt ground for it, if God does not uſe any *compulſion* in hardening their hearts. And here the following things deſerve a ſerious, critical, and impartial conſideration.

1. It is generally *allowed*, that the divine agency, in *ſoftening* the hearts of men, does not imply *compulſion*. In ſtating the objection, the apoſtle ſeems to take it for granted, that there is no compulſion in God's *ſoftening* the hearts of ſaints. Thou wilt ſay then unto me, why doth he yet find fault ? For who hath reſiſted his will ? He had juſt before ſaid, that " God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." That is, he ſoftens the hearts of whom he will, by taking away their ſtony hearts and giving them hearts of fleſh. But he introduces no one as objecting

ing againſt this; becauſe he ſuppoſed it would be allowed by all, that God may ſoften the hearts of believers, without the leaſt degree of compulſion. And it is now univerſally granted by thoſe, who acknowledge a ſpecial divine operation in the converſion of ſinners, that God uſes no compulſion in ſoftening and changing their hearts. But if God uſes no compulſion in *ſoftening* the hearts of ſaints, why ſhould it be ſuppoſed, that he uſes any compulſion in *hardening* the hearts of ſinners? In ſoftening the hearts of ſaints, he is repreſented as making them *new creatures, creating them anew* in Chriſt Jeſus, and exerting the ſame mighty power, that he exerted in raiſing Chriſt from the dead. Theſe expreſſions plainly imply, that he actually produces new and holy affections in their hearts. But if he can produce new and holy affections in the hearts of ſaints, without compulſion; what ground is there to ſuppoſe that he muſt uſe compulſion in producing any moral affections in the hearts of ſinners? If God can *ſoften* the hearts of men without compulſion, it muſt be ſuppoſed, that he can *harden* them without compulſion. This is plain and intelligible to every capacity, and deſerves great attention upon this ſubject.

2. God cannot *compel* men to be ſinful unleſs they all the while *chooſe* to be holy. It has been ſhown, that compulſion always implies either conſtraining, or reſtraining men, contrary to their will. Where there is no conſtraint, nor reſtraint, contrary to the will of a perſon, there can be no compulſion. If ſinners do not chooſe to be holy, then they can never be *reſtrained* from being holy; and if they always chooſe to be ſinful, then they can never be conſtrained to be ſo. It would be abſurd to ſay, that a man is *conſtrained* to do what he *chooſes*; or that he is *reſtrained* from doing what *he does not chooſe*. If ſinners do not in any caſe chooſe holineſs, then they cannot in any caſe be reſtrained from it; and if in all caſes they chooſe ſin, then in no caſe can they be conſtrained to it. But it clearly appears from ſcripture, that ſinners always hate holineſs, and love ſin; hence it is utterly impoſſible that they ſhould be conſtrained to love ſin, or reſtrained from loving holineſs. Was Hazael *conſtrained* to ſin, when God told him by his prophet, that he would deſtroy the life of his prince, and reign in his ſtead? Or was it poſſible, that God ſhould *compel* him to that cruel and inhuman deed, ſo long as he *choſe* to do it? It is abſurd, therefore, for ſinners to ſay that they are reſtrained from holineſs, or conſtrained to ſin, while they actually love ſin and hate holineſs. If they would only keep in view the meaning of their own objection againſt God's hardening their hearts, they would be condemned out of their own mouths, and ſilenced by their own feelings. What can be more inconſiſtent than to complain, that they cannot reſiſt the will of God, when they do

not desire to resist it? or to say that they are *compelled* to sin, when they *love* to sin, and roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongue?

3. The effect produced by the divine agency in hardening the hearts of sinners, demonstrates that there is no *compulsion* in it. The effect produced is a *free, voluntary* choice. God makes them *choose* to act in the very manner in which they do in all cases act. We have an account of many whom God actually hardened; and all appear to have acted freely and voluntarily under the divine agency. Joseph's brethren *chose* to act in the most unfeeling and cruel manner, when, according to the divine prediction and under the divine influence, they threw him into a pit, and sold him into Egypt. Pharaoh, whom God actually hardened, and whom the apostle refers to in the passage under consideration, *chose* to disbelieve the miracles of Moses, and disobey the express commands of God. The heathen nations, whose hearts were hardened, *chose* to come out in battle against Israel, by whom they were destroyed. Judas *chose* to betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver, though he was forewarned of his certain perdition. And the Jews, whose eyes were blinded and whose hearts were hardened, *chose* to crucify the Lord of glory, and reject the counsel of God against themselves. In all these instances of God's hardening the hearts of sinners, the effect produced was a free, voluntary choice. He made them choose to act as they did, and as there was no resistance on their part, so there was no compulsion on his. Compulsion always implies resistance on the part of the person compelled. Joseph was compelled to go into Egypt, because he did all he could to resist the overbearing power of his brethren; but God did not compel them to turn a deaf ear to all his cries and entreaties, because they chose to gratify their malice and revenge. So, sinners are never compelled to sin by the divine operation upon their hearts, because the divine operation makes them willing to sin. It implies a plain contradiction to suppose, that sinners endeavour to resist that power or will of God, by which they are made willing to do evil. If this were possible, then it would be possible for God to *compel* them to sin: but it is not possible, that they should oppose the power which makes them willing to act, and therefore it is not possible, that God should, in any case, *compel* them to act. Hence they have no cause or right to ask, "Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" Did they really desire and endeavour to resist his will in hardening their hearts, they might indeed with great propriety make this demand; but since they always cheerfully comply with his will in hardening their hearts, they have no ground to complain of him, though they have good reason to condemn themselves. Accordingly we find, that those

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who were hardened, did freely acknowledge their own criminality. Joseph's brethren said one to another, "We are *verily guilty* concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we *would not* hear." When Pharaoh had called for Moses and Aaron in haste, he said, "*I have sinned* against the Lord your God, and against you." And again he said, "*I have sinned* this time: the Lord is *righteous*, and I and my people are *wicked*." And Judas the son of perdition freely acknowledged the criminality of what he had done under the influence of his hardened heart. "Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, *repented himself*, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, *I have sinned*, in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Thus the conscience of every hardened sinner will sooner or later condemn him for his own hardness of heart. The reason is, he is willing to be hardened. If sinners really wished, desired, and endeavoured to counteract the divine influence by which they are hardened, then the fault would fall upon God, and not upon themselves. But this is never the case, and of consequence, they are as justly to be blamed and punished, as if they sinned independently of God. The divine influence on their hearts does nothing but make them *willing* to act, and it is their willingness to act, which alone constitutes their guilt. Their choice is their fault, and this choice God charges upon them, and they have no right to charge it upon him. Their sole objection against the divine agency is, that God *compels* them to sin, but this objection has no foundation in nature, and therefore they are altogether criminal for the hardness of their hearts. This will further appear, if it be considered,

4. That sinners are conscious to themselves, that God does not harden their hearts by *compulsion*, because they neither *feel* his operation, nor any voluntary opposition to it. Whenever men are under compulsion, they feel the power that compels them, and their own desire and inability to overcome that power. Sampson, after he had lost his locks, was compelled to be bound; and he felt the power of those who bound him, but found himself unable to overcome it. This holds true in all cases of compulsion. The person compelled feels a power, which he endeavours, but cannot overcome. If sinners, therefore, were compelled to be hardened by the divine operation upon their hearts, they would necessarily feel both the power that operates upon them, and their own endeavour and inability to oppose and overcome that power. But do they ever feel either of these things? Did Judas feel the divine influence upon his heart, or any opposition to that influence? All that he felt was a willingness to betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Did

Pharaoh

Pharaoh feel the power that hardened his heart, or any desire to resist it? All that he felt was a strong and voluntary propensity to destroy the people of God. And it is as true now as ever it was, that sinners do not feel, nor oppose that divine influence, by which they are hardened. They feel themselves entirely free and voluntary as to all their internal affections and external conduct. But if God actually hardened their hearts by compulsion, they would naturally feel a struggle and opposition to his hardening influence. They would be conscious of his influence, and conscious of their own exertions to overcome his influence. And since they never do have this consciousness, they know that there is no ground for their objection, that he *compels* them to sin. They know that they never felt his power operating upon their hearts, and that they never felt any opposition to a power they never felt. They know, therefore, by their own constant experience, which is the highest kind of knowledge, that God never does *compel* them to sin, and that their only plausible objection against his hardening their hearts, is absolutely groundless.

Now, if God can both soften and harden the hearts of men, *without compulsion*, or the least obstruction to their moral agency; then there is no room for the supposition of a *self determining power* in moral agents, which Arminians maintain, and upon which they build their whole system. This observation may be illustrated and confirmed by the remarks of Monsieur BAYLE, one of the most ingenious and learned men that France ever produced. In his life of ARMINIUS, speaking of his controversy with the Calvinists, he observes, "*It were to be wished that he had made a better use of his knowledge.*" To this he subjoins the following note, which is extremely luminous.

"I mean, that he had governed himself by St. Paul's rule. That great apostle, inspired by God, and immediately directed by the Holy Ghost in all his writings, raised to himself the objection which natural light forms against the doctrine of absolute predestination; he apprehended all the force of the objection; he proposes it without weakening it in the least. *God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* This is St. Paul's doctrine, and see here the difficulty which he starts upon it. "*Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*" This objection cannot be pushed further: Twenty pages of the subtilest Molinist could add nothing to it. What could they infer from it more than that in Calvin's hypothesis, God will have men to sin? Now this is what St. Paul knew could be objected against him. But what does he answer? Does he seek for distinctions and molifications? Does he deny the fact? Does he in part only? Does he enter into any particulars? Does he remove any equivocations in the

the words? Nothing of all this; he only alleges the sovereign power of God, and the supreme right which the Creator has to dispose of his creatures as it seems good to him. *Nay, but O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?* All Christians ought to receive a definitive sentence here; a judgment final and without appeal, in the dispute about *grace*; or rather they ought to learn by this conduct of St. Paul, never to dispute about predestination, and at the first motion to oppose it in bar against all subtilties of human wit, whether they offer of themselves, while they are meditating on that great subject, or whether another suggests them. The best and shortest way is, to oppose this strong bank betimes against the inundations of arguments, and consider the definite sentence of St. Paul, as those immovable rocks, whose foundation is in the midst of the sea, against which the proudest billows cannot prevail, but turn to froth, and dash and break themselves upon them in vain. If ever it be safe to give the mind some exercise on points of this kind, at least we ought to sound a retreat betimes and retire behind the bank I spoke of. Had *Arminius* acted thus, as often as his reason suggested to him difficulties against the hypothesis of the reformers, or at all times when he found himself called to answer any disputants, he would have taken a perfectly wise and apostolic course, and made use of the lights of his understanding just as he ought to have done. *Arminius* was no way pressed to oppose the common doctrine, he did not believe that any one run the hazard of salvation by following the hypothesis of *Calvin*. Let us see another circumstance by which he rendered himself inexcusable. To a system full of great difficulties, he substituted another system, which, to speak truly, draws after it no less difficulties than the former. One may say of this doctrine what I have said of the innovations of Saumur. It is more vehement and less constrained than the opinion of Mr. Amyraut, but after all, it is no better than a palliative remedy; for the *Arminians* have soon answered some objections, which, as they pretend, cannot be refuted on Calvin's system; but they find themselves exposed to other difficulties, which they cannot get clear of but by a sincere acknowledgment of the infirmity of the human mind, and the consideration of the incomprehensible infinity of God. And was it worth while to contradict Calvin for this? Ought he to have been so very delicate in the beginning, seeing in the end he must have recourse to such an asylum? Why might he not as well begin with it, since he was doomed to come to it soon or late? He is mistaken who imagines, that after having entered the lists with a great disputant, he will be allowed to triumph only because he had gained some advantage over him at beginning.

A wreſtler, who ſhould outrun his adverſary three parts or more of the race, does not win the crown, unleſs he preſerves his advantage to the end of the courſe. It is the ſame in controverſies; it is not ſufficient to parry the firſt thruſts. The replies and the rejoinders muſt all be ſatisfied, till every doubt is perfectly cleared. Nor this is what the hypotheſis of Arminius, nor that of the Moliniſts, nor that of the Socinians, is able to do. The ſyſtem of the Arminians is only fit to obtain ſome advantages in thoſe preludes of the combat in which the forlorn hope is detached to ſkirmiſh; but when it comes to a general and deciſive battle it is forced to retire, as well as to reſt behind the incomprehenſible myſtery." PHILONOUS.

OBSERVATIONS ON JEREMIAH XVII. 9.

"*The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked; who can know it?*"

No. IX.

(*Continued from page* 417.)

IN this number remarks will be made on the deceitfulneſs of the human heart, with relation to error in judgment or ſpeculation, in things of a religious nature; and ſuch conduct as reſults from, or ſtands connected with it. May the Fountain of all wiſdom lead us to the knowledge of truth and to a ſuitable improvement of it!

It is admitted by all, that ſince man is in a depraved ſtate, he is liable to form incorrect and erroneous opinions, with reſpect to religious ſubjects. But as the idea of criminality or deſert of blame, as attacked to ſuch errors, and the conduct, which reſults from them, is very ungrateful and irkſome to wicked men, they are led to deviſe and employ pleas and excuſes, to vindicate the innocence of error, both of ſentiment and practice.

Their general plea may be thus ſtated. "If we really believe that we form correct ſentiments concerning the divine character, law and government; the nature of duty and moral and religious ſubjects in general, theſe ſentiments, although they may be incorrect and wrong, yet with reſpect to ourſelves, they muſt be right in this ſenſe, that they cannot be imputed to us as ſinful. God, who knows our ignorance and weakneſs, can never be ſuppoſed to blame and condemn us for errors in ſentiment or ſpeculation, and eſpecially, if we have made it our object

what God requires. He requires us to believe them in their true and definite ſenſe. He requires us to believe in his exiſtence and the perfections of his exiſtence, agreeably to the true ſenſe in which they are revealed. Thus he requires us to believe concerning his law and government; concerning Jeſus Chriſt, his goſpel, and the method of ſalvation by him; and concerning the precepts and inſtitutions of his religion. Can it reaſonably be queſtioned that God requires us thus to believe in theſe things or according to the real ſenſe in which they were written, by holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt? Can it with any propriety be urged that God allows us to believe in, or to underſtand them, in any other ſenſe than their true ſenſe? Were God to allow us to believe in, and underſtand the great truths contained in the Bible, in a ſenſe oppoſite to, or different from their real meaning, we ſhould have no certain and infallible ſtandard of faith and practice. Any revealed doctrine might be true, or not true, according as weak and ignorant men might pleaſe to believe, or not believe, concerning it. Surely then, it cannot reaſonably admit of controverſy, that God does, indeed, require us to believe in the truths of revelation, in conformity with their juſt and proper meaning. It muſt be evident, therefore, to every conſiderate and reflecting mind, that erroneous ſentiments concerning duty and divine truths, conſtitute diſobedience to the command of God, and rebellion againſt his authority: and of courſe are inexcuſably ſinful. Nor is it leſs evident that this is the caſe, with reſpect to all thoſe erroneous practices, which reſult from ſuch ſentiments.

2. The holy ſcriptures, or the truths which God requires us to believe and reduce to practice, are expreſſed with ſufficient plainneſs and perſpicuity to be underſtood. However there are ſome things in the Bible hard to be underſtood; and however there may be ſome things which God does not deſign nor require that we ſhould clearly underſtand, at preſent, yet, all thoſe truths, contained in the ſacred volume, which are of a practical nature, and of importance to be clearly underſtood, are ſo plainly expreſſed, that every ſerious inquirer may comprehend their meaning. Indeed, the very idea of revelation, is, that things are made known or manifeſt. Beſides, we have divine promiſe, that the meek ſhall be guided in judgment; that if any man will do the will of God, he ſhall know of doctrines, diſtinguiſh truth from error; and that whoſoever ſeeketh, ſhall find. Every honeſt inquirer will find and know the truth. No ſuch inquirer ever failed of deſirable ſucceſs. It is evident, then, that errors reſpecting duty and religious ſubjects in general, and the attendant errors in practice, be the ignorance from which they originate ever ſo great, are inexcuſably ſinful.

3. Errors

3. Errors in judgment reſpecting duty and divine truths in general, originate from a criminal ſource, blindneſs, or ſinful depravity of heart. Were it not for the wickedneſs or deceit of the heart, the underſtanding would be luminous, and the deciſions of the judgment correct. In heaven, the bleſſed inhabitants ſee eye to eye. There is no jarring or diſcord in their views and ſentiments. Perfect union and harmony exiſt among them. And would not this be the happy caſe with the rational inhabitants of the earth, were it not for their ſinful depravity? What reaſon can be aſſigned why it ſhould not? The true ſource of unbelief and error in religion, with relation to the head, is infidelity and error of heart. Agreeably the Gentiles are repreſented as "having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart." From this ſame ſinful cauſe it was, that they became fools, in their underſtanding, with reſpect to duty and ſubjects of religion in general; and they evinced their folly by "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things." And from this cauſe alſo it was, that they "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worſhipped and ſerved the creature." The darkneſs or wickedneſs of their hearts led them to form the moſt unworthy, diſhonourable and degrading ſentiments with reſpect to the glorious Majeſty of Heaven, and with reſpect to their duty to him. And their conduct thence reſulting was abſurd, impious and abominable in the higheſt degree. Such, in general, is the character of the heathen world at the preſent day. And may it not be added, that numerous and very great errors with reſpect to duty and religious ſubjects in general, exiſt in the Chriſtian world, which are to be traced up to ſinful depravity of heart, as the original cauſe; and which are accompanied with many and ſhocking deeds of darkneſs. But are all theſe errors, in ſentiment and practice, things of a blameleſs nature? Are they chargeable with little or no guilt? So long as they ſtand connected with, or ariſe from a heart deceitful above all things and deſperately wicked, their criminality muſt be very great, and "ſtand confeſt."

4. That error in ſentiment, and the practice which accompanies it, however great the ignorance may be from which they ſpring, are inexcuſably criminal, of extremely dangerous tendency, and deſtructive in their conſequences, is evident from expreſs Bible teſtimony. By this we are certified that theſe were thoſe to whom God would ſend, on account of the ſinfulneſs of their hearts, "ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth;" that theſe are "damnable hereſies," and that "there is a way

which ſeemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Are theſe declarations compatible with the idea, that error in religious ſentiment is either blameleſs or ſafe? Do they not rather evidently imply, that ſuch error is very highly criminal; that it may be, and indeed, ſometimes, if not often is deſtructive to the ſoul in its conſequences? Should the unhappy perſons, under the deſtructive deluſion, as above ſtated, plead that they verily thought that their belief was according to truth, and therefore that they ought not to be blamed and condemned on account of it, would this plea be available? would it meet the divine acceptance? Surely not. O holy God! how juſt and righteous; yet how awful muſt be their condemnation!

Our Saviour, a little previous to his crucifixion, thought fit to let his diſciples know what were the trials and ſufferings to which they would be expoſed, and which they would realize in the courſe of their miniſtry. He aſſured them that they muſt, in a ſhort time, drink the cup, which he was about to drink, or that they muſt ſuffer martyrdom for their religion. And ſuch, he informed them, would be the blind zeal and infatuation of their murderers, that they would think they were doing God ſervice, by their murderous and horrid conduct. But is it to be admitted that their concluſion was juſt? Can it reaſonably be urged, that in putting to a cruel and ignominious death, thoſe holy men, thoſe bleſſed heralds of the goſpel, they rendered to God an acceptable ſervice? Notwithſtanding they *believed* that this was the caſe, it muſt be the verdict of every impartial and conſiderate mind, that their conduct was highly ſinful, and abhorrent in the view of the all holy God. Whoſoever toucheth his children, to harm them, "toucheth the apple of his eye." Their conduct can admit of no excuſe. Nor was Saul of Tarſus excuſable for his bigotry and perſecution of the church of Chriſt. Although, while he was engaged in proſecuting that work of cruelty and of darkneſs, he verily thought he was doing right; kept a conſcience void of offence, and cheriſhed a hope of heaven, which "was firm and bright," yet, no ſooner did the commandment come, than ſin revived and he died. No ſooner was God pleaſed to open his eyes and faſten conviction of truth upon his mind, than he ſaw himſelf to be unſpeakably vile and abominable on account of that conduct, which he had, before, eſteemed laudable and meritorious. He ſaw himſelf condemned, and juſtly condemned; and all his flattering hopes and ſanguine expectations forſook him. After his converſion to the Chriſtian faith, inſtead of juſtifying his conduct, we find him ſpeaking of himſelf as the leaſt of all ſaints, and as unworthy to be an apoſtle of Chriſt, becauſe he had wickedly perſecuted his church.

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The paſſage of ſcripture, (Prov. xxiii. 7.) which is often urged in vindication of error in judgment with reſpect to religious ſubjects, is ſo far from favouring the ſentiment, for which it is adduced, as directly to oppoſe it. "As he thinketh in his heart ſo is he." This paſſage, inſtead of proving that a man is *really right* when he *thinks* himſelf to be ſo, is evidently deſigned to convey the idea, that when the *thoughts or ſentiments of a man's heart are wrong, he is a bad or ſinful character.* The immediate context of this paſſage very clearly illuſtrates and confirms this idea. Of this, it is preſumed, the reader muſt be convinced, by carefully attending to the paſſage, with its connexion.

The plea reſpecting conſcience, as a judge of wrong, &c. is very far from being correct, and the reaſonings from it very far from being concluſive. Conſcience, indeed, when rightly informed, will act as an impartial monitor, and approve or diſapprove our conduct, either as it is right or wrong, holy or ſinful. But how often is this faculty, through the deceitfulneſs and depravity of the heart, miſguided, ſo as to become a dangerous, inſtead of a ſafe and ſure guide and arbiter of action? Agreeably we read of a defiled and ſeared conſcience. Although St. Paul, while perſecuting the church of Chriſt, kept a conſcience void of offence; although it did not reproach him for his infamous and abominable conduct, yet, he as really acted a criminal part, as if conſcience had been awake to reprove him. If his criminality were not *ſo great*, it was nevertheleſs *as real.* In numberleſs inſtances, it is apprehended, wicked men experience no check or rebuke of conſcience, while they are doing the things, which are not lawful and right; but have its approbation. However true it may be, that we ſhould always do wrong in acting in *oppoſition* to the dictates of conſcience, yet it may be, and it is preſumed that it often is the caſe, that we act a criminal part, when we *follow* its dictates. Man is blamable for regulating his conduct according to the dictates of an erroneous or miſguided conſcience, becauſe ſuch a conſcience is the reſult of depravity or wickedneſs of heart, which, in its nature, is voluntary. Errors are never excuſable, when they originate from this ſource.

How unhappy, how dangerous is the condition of wicked men! Their deceitful and wicked hearts are continually ſeducing them into errors, as dangerous as they are flattering. How often is it the caſe, that they cheriſh the fond belief, they are, in a ſpiritual view, rich, and increaſed in goods, & ſtand in need of *nothing;* when they are poor, & wretched, & diſtitute, & ſtand in need of *all things!* How often is it the caſe, that they poſſeſs more knowledge and wiſdom in their own conceit than ſeven men, who can render a reaſon, when they ſtand in need of

of being inſtructed in the firſt principles of the oracles of God! How often is it the caſe, that they think they are doing very well, when they are doing exceedingly ill; and that they are in the ark of ſecurity, when they make lies their refuge; and cry peace and ſafety, when awful deſtruction is but juſt before them!

O the unhappy and perilous ſituation of the ungodly! They have no ſecurity from the moſt dangerous and deſtructive errors, while they remain in a ſecure and impenitent ſtate. Although God has promiſed to preſerve his children from ſuch errors, he has made no ſuch promiſe to the wicked. They are, therefore, conſtantly liable to run into all the mazes of error, and to become ſubject to ſuch ſtrong deluſions, as to believe a lie, and to realize the dreadful conſequence of it. Nor is their ſtate leſs criminal than it is dangerous and unhappy. All their errors and deluſions, with reſpect to duty and divine things in general, are highly and inexcuſably criminal; and for all their errors in belief as well as practice, they are accountable to the Judge of all. Alarming, dreadful condition of ſelf-deceivers! dying in their preſent condition, how awful muſt be their diſappointment! Is not this a conſideration ſufficient to make us tremble, and to lead us with ſolicitude and fervour, to cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! try me, and know my thoughts; and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting."

As there is no ſafety from deſtructive error in ſentiment and practice, but by ſecuring the friendſhip and guidance of the God of wiſdom and of faithfulneſs, let the ſinner be perſuaded immediately to ſecure his friendſhip and guidance, by conſecrating himſelf, body and ſoul, to his ſervice. Let none plead ignorance as an excuſe for neglect of this important and neceſſary duty. Vain will be every plea or excuſe reſpecting this ſubject; for God has clearly pointed out to us, what he would have us to do, to ſecure his ſpecial favour and all the happy conſequences of it. Nothing but wilful blindneſs will prevent our ſeeing and underſtanding what it is that the Lord our God requireth of us; and nothing but this will prevent our compliance with his requirement. If we underſtand not, and are not ſatisfied with what God has revealed to us, as our duty, nothing that men can ſay, will be likely to make us underſtand, or give us ſatisfaction.

O thou! who commandeſt the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, be pleaſed mercifully to illuminate the darkened underſtandings of ſinners, and to ſhine into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, SILAS.

ON

ON CONFERENCE MEETINGS.

THAT the exercises of religion are pleasing to some and displeasing to others is a fact. That this difference of moral taste should lead to different opinions about the propriety and desirableness of frequently engaging in the duties of religion, is not at all wonderful. Christians, who love the exercises of religion, and have been accustomed to meet for conference and prayer, can testify to the pleasure and utility of such meetings. Happy are the saints, while with brotherly affection they converse together upon the interesting things of eternity, sing the praises of their Redeemer, and with one heart and one voice supplicate the throne of grace.

Their hearts burn with benevolent affection and delight, while their tongues speak of the great things of God's kingdom. That such employments are desirable, no Christian can have the least doubt. To prove the propriety and importance of conference meetings would be unnecessary, were not the opposition to them so strong in some places, as to prevail with serious people, who have not been accustomed to them, still to neglect them. The opposition here mentioned is not peculiar to professed Deists, the immoral and profane; it is often manifested by formal professors, and, with sorrow be it spoken, by many public teachers of religion. Opposition from such a quarter chills the affections, and discourages the pious attempts of the friends of religion, who always associate the idea of the ministerial office with cordial, judicious friendship to the cause of the Redeemer. But even in places, where opposition from such characters is felt, it is of great importance, as we hope to prove, that the few friends of Christ frequently meet for prayer and religious conversation. To Christians in general, and to those in particular, who are much exposed to the opposition of carnal professors, the following remarks are with affection addressed:

1. From the nature of religion, and from the practice of the saints, occasional meetings for social worship, prayer and conference, evidently appear proper; and proper too, notwithstanding any supposable opposition from those, who ridicule religious affections. They are proper because religion is of a social nature, and very much consists in the sincere and mutual expressions of benevolent affection. It is proper for Christians to "speak of the glorious honour of God's majesty and talk of all his wondrous works." It is proper for them to meet for this purpose, that they may "shew forth from day to day his salvation." It is proper for them in this respect to imitate the ancient saints; for "they that feared the Lord spake often one

to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them who feared the Lord and thought upon his name." "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, *make known* his deeds among the people; ſing pſalms unto him; talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that ſeek the Lord." "I will praiſe thee, O Lord, with all my heart; I will *ſhew forth* all thy marvellous works. I will extol thee, my God, O King, I will *declare* thy greatneſs. And all men" (if they do their duty) "ſhall abundantly *utter* the memory of thy great goodneſs. O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Theſe paſſages, and many more like them, not only evince the propriety of frequent Chriſtian converſation, ſocial prayer and praiſe, but very ſtrongly imply the obligations, Chriſtians are under, often unitedly to engage in them.

But, 2. In the tenth of Hebrews the apoſtle directs—"And let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and good works; not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together as the manner of ſome is, but *exhorting* one another, and ſo much the more as ye ſee the day approaching." From the command here to exhort one another, it is evident, that the apoſtle has not reference in this paſſage to public worſhip. The text is too plain to need a comment. In the 3d chapter of the ſame epiſtle Chriſtians are required to "exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day." In the 3d chapter of Coloſſians the ſame duty in ſubſtance is enjoined. "Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in your hearts unto the Lord." The ſaints have the promiſe of Chriſt's ſpecial preſence, when they meet for his worſhip. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt," ſays our bleſſed Saviour. Where is the true Chriſtian, who does not deſire an interview with his glorious Redeemer?

3. It is not eaſy to conceive how Chriſtians can glorify their heavenly Father, while they neglect ſuch meetings. For Chriſtians to be active in glorifying God, is to let their light ſhine in the view of others. To be conſcious themſelves only, that they have the true light, is like lighting a candle and putting it under a buſhel, and not on a candleſtick. The glory of God is in an important ſenſe committed to the care of Chriſtians. Upon their fidelity it depends whether it ſhine or not. Do they appear delighted with his ſervice, engaged openly and boldly in his cauſe, and more pleaſed with the company of zealous Chriſtians than with any other? Then it is eaſy to ſee, they glorify God; for they then implicitly declare, that the being,

ing, character, honour and ſervice of God are higher in their eſtimation, than any other object or purſuit. And to be thus diſtinguiſhed from the world is the *only* way, in which they can be active in promoting the divine glory. If they are barely punctilious in attending public worſhip, and in diſcharging the common duties of humanity, while they treat other meetings for ſocial worſhip and religious improvement with averſion or neglect, there will be room for the queſtion, What do ye more than others? "What need is there of religion? can't we be good members of ſociety without it?" The ſaints can give a practical anſwer to this infidel queſtion only by coming out from the world, and being ſeparate, not in their common buſineſs, their food, and their dreſs: but in their affections, in their joys, and in the objects of their purſuit. Let them glorify God by making it appear from their lives, that his religion is a reality, a practical principle, as different from all the theories of human invention, as light is from darkneſs. Let them ſhow to the world, that they eſteem the divine glory above worldly honour, eaſe, or affluence; or let them ceaſe to aſſume the name of Chriſtians.

4. Religious meetings for conference are important as a mean for the conviction and ſalvation of ſinners, and more important in proportion as other means are leſs enjoyed, which is generally the caſe where conferences are moſt oppoſed. Nothing has a more direct and ſucceſsful tendency to alarm and convince the unregenerate, than for them to ſee the ſatisfaction and engagedneſs of Chriſtians in the truths and employments of religion. In this way the cavils of many Deiſts have been ſilenced, and many thoughtleſs ſouls brought to a ſenſe of their danger. That ſuch meetings are peculiarly calculated to awaken and alarm the wicked, is very evident from their ſtrong and virulent oppoſition to them. When they ſee Chriſtians thus engaged with ſo much ſeeming ſatisfaction, they feel, that there is an eſſential difference between the reliſh of their hearts, and that of the ſaints. This ſuggeſts to them, that they can never be happy without a change of heart. They then feel, that the ſame heaven, which gratifies a Chriſtian, would be tireſome and intolerable to them. Hence Chriſtians, in frequently meeting to engage in the worſhip of God, give formal profeſſors and all other claſſes of the wicked, loud and practical warning of their guilt and their danger. And this warning is often thus underſtood; and on this account it is eminently uſeful and important to awaken and ſave periſhing ſouls. O Chriſtians, who know "the terror of the Lord," let your conduct at leaſt "perſuade men."

5. Nearly connected with the two preceding conſiderations is the general proſperity of religion; to promote which, conference

ference and prayer meetings have been ſingularly beneficial. For, beſide their tendency to inſpire a general ſpirit of inquiry, they are ſuited to keep alive and increaſe ſerious impreſſions, where they are begun. Many, it is preſumed, even in places, where religious affections are generally deſpiſed, have ſome apprehenſions of their danger. Such awakenings, it is feared, often prove like the ſeed by the way ſide, for want of Chriſtian aſſiſtance and direction.

The writer of theſe remarks knows, by experience, how diſagreeable it is to be under ſuch exerciſes without knowing to whom he might apply for direction or advice, and indeed without knowing that others had ſimilar exerciſes. Though God is the only and ſovereign Agent in awakening and converting ſinners, yet the uſe of means is adopted into his plan of operation. In an important ſenſe the want of proper means occaſions the loſs of many ſouls, But religious meetings, where doctrinal and practical ſubjects are freely and tenderly diſcuſſed, have a happy tendency to encourage ſerioufneſs, cheriſh convictions, and fix in the mind a deep ſenſe of eternal realities. Farther, as the proſperity of religion depends entirely on the holy will of God, great is the encouragement for Chriſtians unitedly to ſupplicate his interpoſition in its favour. "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence, and give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth." Saith Jehovah, "I ſaid not unto the ſeed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain;" but, "Aſk of me things to come concerning my ſons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." Theſe endearing, condeſcending expreſſions afford Chriſtians the greateſt encouragement, and lay them under the moſt ſolemn obligations to meet together frequently, and ſtrive and pray for the ſpread of religion.

6. The meetings under conſideration have a natural and happy tendency to promote religious knowledge and religious affections among Chriſtians. It is unneceſſary to prove, that a frequent diſcuſſion of religious ſubjects is the way to obtain a knowledge of them. Almoſt as unneceſſary is it to remark the importance of Chriſtian knowledge in this age of licentiouſneſs and infidelity.

At ſuch ſeaſons of ſocial worſhip Chriſtians can become acquainted with the ſentiments, exerciſes, views, trials, afflictions, and joys of each other. This acquaintance, beſides directing them in the Chriſtian life, will lead them to ſympathiſe in each other's afflictions, and participate in each other's joys. In this way, as fellow travellers, they will mutually aſſiſt each other in the rugged journey of life. For the dear followers of Chriſt often to unite in addreſſing the *ſame* infinite Being for the *ſame* bleſſings, to join in ſinging the praiſes of the *ſame* Saviour,

to

to converſe upon the *ſame* animating ſubjects, and to be engaged in the *ſame* glorious cauſe has the moſt direct and natural tendency to unite them in ſentiment and in the bonds of brotherly love, animate their devotion, and encourage them to fight the good fight of faith. On the contrary, if Chriſtians have little or no intercourſe with each other, only in their worldly concerns, their religious affections will languiſh, and the public worſhip of God will commonly be to ſuch, a cold, tireſome, unintereſting ſervice. Let all the followers of the Lamb "ſtudy the things, which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another."

7. No ſolid objection can be urged againſt the lawfulneſs, propriety, and importance of conference meetings. It is in the view of Chriſtians, no objection to them, that Deiſts, formal profeſſors, and all the enemies of practical godlineſs diſlike and oppoſe them. It is no excuſe for Chriſtians to neglect them, becauſe they are violently oppoſed. "The friendſhip of the world is enmity with God." "He, that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution." The friends of Chriſt muſt expect, through much tribulation, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Let not their hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Chriſtians cannot excuſe themſelves in the neglect of ſuch meetings, becauſe they are the occaſion of much ſin, or for fear they will cauſe other evils. They have been proved to be a duty; to perform which, belongs to Chriſtians, leaving all the conſequences with God. "Behold, to obey is better than ſacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." Let Chriſtians take their place, and not aſſume the prerogative of Divine Providence.

Nor can Chriſtians lawfully neglect this important duty, and ſubſtitute ſome other in its place. One duty never interferes with another. Different duties are to attain different objects. The Chriſtian may not ſpend all his time in the field, nor in the cloſet; for this conduct would prevent him from watching over and exhorting his fellow Chiſtians, which he may not neglect.

Let all, who love the Lord Jeſus, boldly appear on his ſide, openly eſpouſe his cauſe, and exhibit to the world, an example of the efficacy of that religion, which conſtitutes the new heart. And let all, who feel unintereſted in the glory of the Redeemer and the ſpread of his cauſe, no more deceive themſelves with the hope, that they are Chriſtians. "Every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt; for the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and the fire ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is." ADELPHUS.

CHARACTER

CHARACTER OF THE *AGREEABLE* MINISTER.

THE *agreeable* miniſter in his public performances is conciſe. He does not weary the patience of his auditors with long prayers and long ſermons. Inſtead of detaining them the tedious ſpace of an hour and an half or two hours, in his exerciſes, he has the *humanity and politeneſs* to diſmiſs them after a detention of *forty* minutes, or an *hour* at the fartheſt.

In addreſs, his manner and aſpect are *agreeable*. In prayer, and in the delivery of his ſermons, he puts on no airs of *awful ſolemnity*, but his utterance is gentle, mild, pleaſant and charming; his periods are harmonious; his cadences ſoft and delightful, while a benignant and ſweetly complacent ſmile diffuſes over, and plays upon the pliant features of his engaging countenance.

Nor is he leſs *agreeable* in matter, than in manner. In prayer, he makes choice of acceptable words and pleaſing expreſſions; ſuch as will excite no unpleaſant emotions in the mind, no ſentiments degrading to the *dignity* of human nature, no ideas to diſturb the conſcience, or wound the ſenſibility and feelings of the heart; but he happily chooſes words and expreſſions of an oppoſite nature, tendency and effect; ſuch as ſoothe and tranquilize, tune all the affections of the heart to pleaſing uniſon and delightful harmony, and elevate the ſoul on the wings of complacent, cheerful and lively devotion, to that all good and gracious Being, who is the friend of men; who with *complacency* beholds his great family, and will have them *all* to be ſaved.

In his diſcourſes, he judiciouſly avoids all abſtruſe and intricate ſubjects; all controverted points in theology, and all ſuch doctrines, as might occaſion diſturbance to, and among his hearers. He does not meet and addreſs his people on the Sabbath, as one commiſſioned "*not* to ſend peace, *but* a ſword; to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law." But ſtudying the things, which make for *peace*, he *prudently*, in his preaching, declines the uſe and application of ſuch *hyperbolical*, and highly *figurative* expreſſions, as *ſeem* and *only* ſeem to repreſent man as "ſhapen in iniquity and conceived in ſin;" as being "eſtranged from the womb, and as going aſtray as ſoon as he is born;" as being ſo depraved, in a natural or unrenewed ſtate, as that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually, and fully ſet in him to do evil;" as poſſeſſing a mind, which is "enmity againſt God, which is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Nor will his *complaiſance* allow him to ſuggeſt the idea,

idea, that his hearers, either generally, or in any instance, like the wicked Jews of old, are a brood "of serpents, a generation of vipers, & of their father the devil." Neither will his *refinement* and *delicacy* allow him to shock the mind with the frightful and terrific words, "hell, damnation, lake of fire," &c. He carefully avoids *invidious* distinction, in his public addresses, between saints and sinners; and instead of *hurting* the feelings of the latter, and *discouraging* them in their laudable use of the *means of grace*, by telling them that "God heareth not sinners;" but that "their thoughts, their way, their sacrifice, and even their prayers, are an abomination and sin" in the pure eyes of the divine holiness, he exhorts them in common with saints to *grow* in grace, to cherish all their *good dispositions*, to cultivate their *virtuous affections*, and to make *advances* in every *good attainment*. Possessing ideas of God, which are rational, honourary and attractive, he does not describe him as a being of "vengeance and recompense, as a consuming fire, as angry with the wicked, as setting his face against them and dealing with them in fury;" but represents him as a being, rich in mercy, as delighting in pardons; as not willing that any should perish; as beholding his frail and wandering creatures with eyes of *indulgent complacency;* as pitying their weaknesses and infirmities; as easily *reconciled* to them, and as disposed to accept their *sincere*, though imperfect services. By representing the divine character in this amiable, lovely and attractive manner, his hearers, instead of viewing God with emotions of terror, view him with pleasing and delightful sensations, esteem him as their father and friend, derive *consolation* from his great and precious promises, and *confide* in his faithfulness as a sure pledge of a happy life beyond the grave. Well acquainted with the nature and duties of Christianity, he describes them in so rational, just and engaging a manner, as to charm the ear, *delight the heart*, and *ensure obedience*. Exhibited by him, in her lovely form and charming beauties, religion is divested of superstition, enthusiasm and severity; and of every thing of a disagreeable and repulsive nature, or discordant with the *best feelings of the natural heart*. Thus exhibited in her native and alluring beauty, she captivates *every soul*, and effectually recommends her injunctions to the practice of *all*. Liberal and candid in his sentiments, he imposes no *Shibboleth* upon those, who are desirous of making a public profession of religion, and of availing themselves of the privileges of the positive institutions of the gospel. *Whosoever* will, may come. He extends the invitation to all. Nor does he imprudently censure, and otherwise discipline any members of his church, nor *encourage* the practice, knowing that this would create uneasiness and disturbance,

diſturbance. However ſome of the members do not give *quite* ſo good evidence of their *faith* in the goſpel, as could be deſired, nor *quite* ſo good evidence of a *moral and religious* life, as could be wiſhed; yet, for the ſake of *peace* and *Chriſtian* harmony, he *wiſely* judges that it is beſt *charitably* to paſs over their imperfections, and leave them to judge for themſelves, and conduct as may appear right in their own eyes. With the *innocent* amuſements of the card table, the aſſembly room, theatrical entertainments, &c. he does not interfere, unleſs by encouraging a *moderate* indulgence of them, and *civilly* cautioning againſt *exceſs*. His liberality of ſentiment leads him to think favourably of *Jews*, *Mahometans* and *Pagans*, as fair candidates for heaven, and with a *laudable zeal and vehemence*, to oppoſe every illiberal and contracted theory, or ſcheme of religion.

Such is the character of the *agreeable* miniſter in the pulpit; and *agreeable* is the reſult of the *agreeable* manner and matter of his public performances. His people, in general, are *Chriſtians by baptiſm*, and many of them by *profeſſion*. Happy in their friendſhip, he enjoys the liberal and *ſubſtantial* effects of it. While he thus imparts to them ſpiritual things, they cheerfully and with an unſparing hand contribute to him of their carnal things. No religious controverſies and altercations ariſe among them, to their, or to his diſturbance; no *enthuſiaſtic freaks*, no religious *glooms* and wild *commotions*, no diſguſtful *canting*, nor evening prayer meetings to carry on the *works of darkneſs*. Such unhappy and evil events never exiſt. But if at any time they begin to exiſt, care is taken to crop them in the bud.

In his ſervices on funeral occaſions the *agreeable* miniſter acquits himſelf *agreeably*. He conſoles the mourners with the conſideration that they have not to mourn, as thoſe, who have no hope; that their deceaſed relative and friend has eſcaped from the pains and troubles of this life, and is now hopefully in a ſtate of reſt and peace; that their affliction is but a *fatherly* chaſtiſement, and *deſigned* for their beſt and everlaſting good; and that they may joyfully hope that ere long they will meet the deceaſed and all their pious friends, in a better world and life, where the union will be unſpeakably joyful and endleſs. Theſe conſoling ſuggeſtions are enforced and ſtrengthened by the occaſional prayer.

In his viſits to the ſick and dying, all the tender ſympathies of his ſoul are called into lively exerciſe. He kindly comforts them with the pleaſing idea that their heavenly Father and *Friend* afflicts them for *their good*; reminds them of their paſt ſober, regular and moral deportment, as a *comforting ground* for their hope in the rich mercy of God, and his gracious acceptance of them, ſhould their ſickneſs be unto death. But ſhould their paſt conduct have been notoriouſly abandoned and irreligious,

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and they ſhould manifeſt much anxiety and diſtreſs of mind, from an apprehenſion that the door of mercy is cloſed againſt them, and that their end will be deſtruction, he will endeavour to ſoothe their troubled minds and aſſuage their anguiſh by exhibiting to their view the infinite benevolence and boundleſs compaſſion of God; his *love of ſinners*, his willingneſs and ability to ſave the vileſt of men at the eleventh hour; that his merciful ear is open to *their* cry; that they muſt look to him in prayer in the *beſt manner they are able*, and that he will hear and grant them an anſwer of peace. Thus, inſtead of *unfeelingly* adding to their diſtreſs, by repreſenting their ſituation as exceedingly dangerous; that their prayers will not be heard unleſs made with a renewed temper of heart; that they are abſolutely dependent on the ſovereign mercy of God for a new heart, and that it is very uncertain whether he will give them ſuch a heart; that they juſtly deſerve the infliction of everlaſting wrath; that ſhould this be their awful portion, it will be owing to themſelves, to their own voluntary perverſeneſs and oppoſition to the method of ſalvation as exhibited in the goſpel. Inſtead of thus adding diſtreſs to their already diſtreſſed minds, he adminiſters the balm of conſolation, animates them with hope, and inſpires them with *confidence in the divine mercy*.

In his parochial and ſocial viſits, he is *pleaſant and facetious*, and relates anecdotes in a moſt *agreeable and humourous manner*. With much eaſe and fluency he converſes on the common occurrences of life; the domeſtic affairs of the family; on faſhions and amuſements; the concerns of the ſtate; on foreign concerns and events, and on whatever ſubjects appear to be moſt intereſting and deſirable to his people; but ſubjects of religion, and eſpecially thoſe of an experimental nature, he but ſeldom if ever introduces, knowing that ſuch ſubjects tend to *diſputation, ſpiritual pride, and a train of evil conſequences*.

On feſtival occaſions, ſuch as weddings, he is exceedingly *agreeable*. Inſtead of checking the innocent feſtivity of the gueſts, either by looks, or words, or actions, he gives it countenance by his preſence, and, occaſionally, by moving to the ſound of the viol and joining in the intricate mazes of the ſportive dance. In this he acts a very *conſiderate and prudent part*; for were he haſtily to withdraw from the ſcene, and, eſpecially, with marks of diſapprobation, he would incur their diſpleaſure. Beſides, by uniting with them in innocent amuſements, he will be likely to keep them from *extravagance and exceſs*; and above all, by thus inſinuating himſelf into their eſteem and affections, he will be in a ſituation *peculiarly* favourable to recommend to their love and practice, a religion which is *ſocial, cheering, and rational*; a religion *pleaſing* to their *minds* and *congenial* with the *deſires and feelings of their hearts*. How much better is

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it to conduct thus; *thus* to accommodate himself to the disposition and views of all, that he might *gain some, and win many*, than to conduct in such a manner, as to represent the benign religion of the gospel as *incompatible with the pleasures and amusements of the world*, and as possessing such qualities, as none can love and cordially embrace, but the *gloomy, the unsocial, and the austere.*

Such is the character of the *agreeable* minister! How beautiful is the portrait! How charming the picture! *Let us attentively survey, and consider it well. Let us look upon it, and receive instruction.*

N——E.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The above hasty sketches are respectfully submitted to the disposal of your superior judgment; should you judge it best to publish them in whole *or in* part, *when the result is known to the writer, he may be induced to furnish for the Magazine, the character of the* faithful *minister. Yours, with esteem and respect,*

THE AUTHOR.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

DOMESTIC.

EXTRACTS FROM REV. MR. CRAM's JOURNAL.

(Concluded from page 437.)

Nov. 28. RODE twelve miles without passing any house, and without any refreshment excepting a drink of water. I thought of the different situation I was in from what the people in Massachusetts experienced on this Thanksgiving day. But I was under circumstances to realize the astonishing mercy of God. There were four or five families in the neighbourhood where I lodged. I gave notice I was a Missionary, and where I expected to lodge, but none came in to see me. The woman of the house where I lodged, embraced every opportunity to converse with me on the things of religion. She embraced hopes of conversion many years ago, but was under great disadvantages about attending on religious instruction; if there was a meeting in the neighbourhood, she was not allowed to attend. Her husband appeared, as he professed, not to place any value on Christianity.

Came to the Scotch settlement at the Big Spring, where I tarried till after the Sabbath. Preached to them from Deut.

viii.

viii. 1, &c. and Luke vi. 20. Since I first visited them, this settlement has much increased. It now consists of about 43 families. A church was lately gathered here, consisting of about 50 communicants.

Saturday, visited a house where a grand-daughter of President Edwards lives. She has distinguishing ideas of religion, and is considered a pious person.

December 22, Lord's day. Preached in Farmington at the Sulphur Springs from Heb. iii. 7, 8, 9. The hearers were composed of different denominations. The people in this settlement are from different parts. The most wealthy are from Maryland. It was thought too late to have a second sermon, but I gave an exhortation, and particularly urged it upon them to labour to have a stated place of preaching near these springs, as numbers now and formerly, when I have preached in the vicinity, have shewed a readiness to attend on preaching. I was invited to lodge in Phelpstown, two miles and a half east. This family are Presbyterians from Pennsylvania. They have experienced many difficulties from the laxness of the new settlers in these parts. In the evening two families were together, and I laboured to instruct them how to oppose lax sentiments, and to show them what use they should make of the opposition they experienced. One of Dr. Bellamy's sermons on the wisdom of God in the permission of sin was read.

Monday evening, read some things from the Moral Repository, which I thought were calculated to gain the attention of youth; but two young men, who had come in, went into another room. Some of the youth of the house were attentive, and shewed the advantage of early instruction in the principles of religion. The young men, who came in, were engaged to promote a frolic. One was a loose character; they were both from New England formerly. I spake on the evil of frolicing. Many in these parts could not tell who was the first sinner, and some could not tell who made them.

A woman spake to me who used to keep a public house in Onondaga. She wished me to call at her house. She has become a distinguished member of the church, though formerly she said she was hypocritical in her attention to ministers. Conversed with some women; one appeared much exercised about her soul.

Dec. 31. Came to Nine Mile Creek. Called at a public house, where the heads of the family are professors of religion. They were making preparation, young people and others, who had appointed to dance there that night. I signified my readiness to preach to them, but no place was found for preaching.

1806, Jan. 1. While my horse was shoeing, conversed with a married person who had been at the ball last night, who seemed

ed ſome affected with my remarks. Came on to Onondaga-hollow; viſited the Epiſcopalian Miſſionary. He was decidedly againſt the amuſements practiſed at this ſeaſon. This Miſſionary had laboured to introduce himſelf to the Onondaga Indians, but had not been ſucceſsful. One obſerved they had ſuch objections as theſe: the diſorders which took place among white people, which were not known among Indians, ſuch as drunkenneſs, cheating, ſtealing, running in debt, fighting, being put in jails, ſtate priſon, &c.

Thurſday morning had diſcourſe with one who has embraced hopes he was converted ſince he came to this part of the country.

Friday came on to Rev. Mr. Leonard's, in Cazanavia. They have lately been engaged in this place in building a large and elegant meeting-houſe, which is nearly completed. This is one of the moſt flouriſhing villages in theſe weſtern ſettlements; it was begun by foreigners from Holland. Mr. L. had great hopes from his exertions, and thought he could effect the ſame in other places had he opportunity. I ſtated how many meeting-houſes were now uſed by ſectaries in my native State. He thought they would yet be the means of obtaining true preaching. There are about 60 members in the church in this place.

Jan. 5. Lord's day. I preached from Matth. xviii. 20. One was here from near Oneida Caſtle; converſed ſome with him on Indian concerns, while the people were coming together. Made remarks to them from Pſ. ii. After meeting converſed with a teacher of a ſchool of decent addreſs, lately from Vermont, who advocated the univerſal reſtoration of all created intelligences to happineſs. Friday came on to Stockbridge, about 6 miles. Since I was in this place before, the Oneida pagans have agreed to hear the goſpel preached in this town. This Sabbath they had appointed to meet here for the firſt time, but ſomething has prevented. This was brought about by ſome addreſs that paſſed betwixt the Chriſtian and the Pagan Indians at Oneida, reſpecting attending to the Alleghany prophet. The Stockbridge Indians adviſed the Pagans to try their religion, ſo if one failed the other might ſupport them.

Monday viſited one of the ſchools. Preached from 1 Cor. xii. laſt verſe. Gave the Indians an account of my travels among other Indians.

Jan. 10. Friday. Viſited the North School in Stockbridge. Above thirty attend this ſchool, and appear as well as ſchools in general. The maſter is a Mohecunuh, and moſt or all the ſcholars are of the ſame tribe. The maſter teaches them the Weſtminſter catechiſm, which they have in their own language, once every week. Viſited ſome families. They appeared very

decent

decent and attentive. At one houſe converſed with a youth of about 16 years of age, who lately joined the church in Stockbridge. The ſchoolmaſter is a man of ſenſe, has a talent for governing a ſchool, and appeared ſome thoughtful about his ſoul.

Friday evening a woman came to ſee me, who has been under concern for her ſoul. Others came with her. She expreſſed great deſires that God would open her eyes, that ſhe might ſee her wickedneſs. Her father, who was with her, and who has been a great drunkard, it was thought was deeply affected. Another expreſſed ſome hopes ſhe had met with a change lately. Two profeſſors appeared ſerious, and engaged to learn more of the way of truth.

Lord's day, viſited the Indians at Oneida Caſtle. Their Miſſionary has not viſited them, it was thought, ſince laſt October. There are four profeſſors of religion, who are white people, in the Caſtle. Met with a number of white people and a few Indians at Schenado's houſe. Some of the white people had been at the pagan meeting in the ſouth ſettlement. From a conſideration of the deſtitute ſituation of the church at Oneida, ſpake from Iſaiah liv. 11—14. One laboured to interpret for me after preaching, but he was not very capable. Schenado took me very affectionately by the hand, and thanked me for attending a meeting at his houſe. He wiſhed much to have a miniſter live with them. He ſaid their miniſter told him they muſt procure ſome one who is young to attend to them. They thought they could be better provided with an interpreter if I would meet with them again.

Jan. 13. Monday evening preached at a ſchool houſe in Vernon, from John iv. 10. Converſed with one who had ſome difficulties reſpecting diſtinguiſhing doctrines.

Tueſday attended a meeting with the pagan Indians at Hendrick Smith's. Though a ſtormy cold day, about thirty attended with their principal men. Spoke from Mark xvi. 15. Was particular in explaining the law of ten commands, and of the great preparation there was made to reveal the Lord Jeſus; of the neceſſity of ſuch a Saviour, and that he might be known when he appeared in the fleſh. They were very attentive, returned me many thanks, made ſpeeches to their people on what I ſaid; ſome ſaid they never heard theſe things ſo plainly ſtated before. Wiſhed me to meet with them at their council houſe. One of their ſpeakers urged the importance of taking pains that all their people ſhould attend.

Wedneſday converſed with ſome profeſſors of religion at Vernon, who were in perplexity about their ſoul concerns. One of them heard me preach yeſterday.

Thurſday rode to Oneida Caſtle, but the interpreter they expected had not come. One of the chiefs agreed he would go after him if I would meet with them on the next day. I agreed, and rode to Verona, where I found Mr. Job Wight, a candidate for the miniſtry. He preached in the evening; I gave an exhortation, and ſpake of the temptations they were expoſed to ſince the attention to religion among them. They wiſhed me to preach to them.

Friday two of the church in Verona and Mr. Wight accompanied me to the Caſtle; but the interpreter could not be procured. Had an interview with White Martinus, a chief, two of the Dennies, and Iſaac Webſter. As I had heard of their wiſh for preaching about the commencement of the year, I reminded them of what is ſtated of the birth of Chriſt in the 2d of Luke. They wiſhed me to ſpeak to Domine Briſſet or ſome others, about obtaining a miniſter to come and reſide with them. Spoke of the neglects of their Miſſionary. I ſtated that his advanced age, &c. might be a reaſon of his not attending on them, that they were men of buſineſs, and muſt labour to be in a way to take care of themſelves, and to join with our white people, ſome of whom were with me, and labour to get a miniſter betwixt them. The chief gave me thanks for attending upon them, and they agreed if a miniſter ſhould come on, they would aſſiſt him what they could; that a houſe and land was appropriated for the purpoſe of ſupporting a miniſter.

Saturday preached at Verona, on walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt.

Jan. 19. Lord's day met with the pagan Indians at their council houſe; ſpake to them from the 2d of Luke, on the birth of Chriſt, and what was ſaid by the angel and the heavenly hoſts. About ſixty heard me with attention. I deſired them to inform me if they did not underſtand any thing I ſaid before or at this time. One of their ſpeakers, after ſpeaking to the people, deſired me to ſpeak on the ſeventh command, what I had ſaid at the other meeting, as ſome were now preſent who did not hear me before. They returned me many thanks; and one obſerved they ſhould labour to inculcate what I had obſerved to them, from Sabbath to Sabbath. They remarked that their prophet had urged the ſame things reſpecting drinking, and the law of marriage, &c. I obſerved, that I was glad of many things the prophet urged, but he could point out no way in which our ſins could be forgiven; that he had no proof in favour of their old cuſtoms of worſhip. I laboured to illuſtrate the doctrine of atonement.

REVIVAL

REVIVAL OF RELIGION AT WRENTHAM.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

If the following narrative of the revival of religion in the North Pariſh in Wrentham, will, in your judgment, be gratifying to your Chriſtian readers, you will pleaſe to inſert it.

IN June, 1798, I took upon me the paſtoral charge of the church in this pariſh. The church was then ſmall, conſiſting of about fifteen male members, and not far from the ſame number of females. The church appeared united in a belief of the Calviniſtic ſyſtem of doctrines: and but little oppoſition was made to thoſe doctrines in the ſociety. The people generally attended public worſhip, and, perhaps, with as much decency and order in time of worſhip, as in congregations in general. But it did not appear that the great concerns of eternity had much impreſſion on the minds of many. Some of the youth, as uſual, were pleaſed with thoſe amuſements which ſerve to remove the mind farther from ſerious conſideration, and to prejudice it againſt the ſelf-denying religion of Jeſus.

About a year after my connexion with this people began, attempts were made to ſet up a monthly religious conference. Theſe attempts, after meeting with diſcouraging circumſtances, ſucceeded ſo far, that numbers attended the conferences beſide profeſſors of religion.

At length, theſe meetings became more frequent than at firſt; and, by many, were eſteemed uſeful in communicating religious inſtruction, and in promoting union among Chriſtians, in ſeeking the proſperity of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

Although, for the firſt three years of my miniſtry among this people, there appeared no general awakening among them, yet God was graciouſly pleaſed to diſpoſe a number to join themſelves with the profeſſed friends of Chriſt; eleven perſons were added to the church, of whom three were by recommendation from other churches.

In the winter of 1802, ſeveral perſons appeared to have their minds ſolemnly impreſſed with a view of their ſins and danger. This attention was principally among heads of families. Tho' this attention did not embrace the whole pariſh, yet it might occaſion the general ſolemnity, which for a time appeared.

Now our conference meetings had more numerous attendants than before the awakening began. Numbers appeared to feel that they could neither pleaſe God, nor be happy, while deſtitute of the religion of Chriſt.

There is reaſon to believe, that ſeveral of the awakened became reconciled to God. The number of praying families was

increaſed,

increaſed, and the church enlarged with profeſſed friends to Chriſt and his kingdom. This year eleven perſons were added to the church.

It pleaſed a ſovereign God to continue his gracious viſit among us, notwithſtanding the ungrateful returns we made for paſt favours, and the refuſal of many to comply with the reaſonable requirements of the goſpel. In the year 1803, ſeveral other perſons appeared to have their minds ſeriouſly impreſſed with a conviction of their ſinful hearts and lives, and of the puniſhment juſtly due to them for ſin. Some of theſe, as they hoped, were made willing to accept of ſovereign mercy, and devote themſelves to the intereſt and honour of the Redeemer. This year eleven more were added to the church: four of whom were young perſons. In the following year three more of the youth publicly covenanted with God and his people.

After this, for ſeveral months, there appeared a great degree of coldneſs and inattention to religion among us. But few attended the conference meetings. Even among profeſſors of religion, there appeared a want of zeal and engagedneſs for the cauſe of Chriſt. In the fall of the year 1804, and winter following, God was pleaſed graciouſly to viſit, by the effuſions of his Holy Spirit, another part of this town, under the miniſtry of the Rev. Mr. Fiſk. Though we all knew this, yet a general ſtupidity apparently remained on the minds of thoſe who had never manifeſted any friendſhip to religion. But ſeveral of the friends of religion among us, by ſeeing and hearing what great things God was doing in another part of the town, appeared greatly to rejoice, and to feel a freſh engagedneſs for the intereſt of religion, and very deſirous that God would again viſit us in this part of the town by his ſpecial influences. At length theſe deſires were, in a degree, joyfully gratified. Early in the ſpring of the year 1805, a number of the young people in the pariſh appeared to have an impreſſive view of their loſt ſtate by nature. The important intereſts of their ſouls manifeſtly employed their thoughts and concern. This attention rapidly increaſed among the youth. It ſoon appeared that nearly thirty perſons had their attention to their ſouls arreſted. For a ſhort time, there appeared a general ſolemnity upon the minds of the people in the pariſh. Our weekly conferences were uncommonly full for ſeveral weeks; at which, and on the Sabbaths, the aſſemblies were unuſually attentive to goſpel inſtruction. But this *general* ſolemnity ſoon abated. Still a conſiderable number appeared to have deep and abiding impreſſions on their minds. With theſe it was now eaſy to find acceſs. Their minds were open to receive inſtruction, and, with eagerneſs

gerneſs, would they liſten to truths which deſcribe the natural heart of man, and diſtinguiſh its exerciſes from thoſe of the heart renewed by ſovereign grace.

In the ſpace of a few weeks, after the awakening extended, as above noticed, nearly twenty perſons appeared to entertain ſome hope that they had become reconciled to God, and could truſt in Chriſt as the only, and all-ſufficient Saviour of ſinners. Of theſe ſixteen have been added to the church.

In the latter part of the ſummer, there appeared a conſiderable abatement in this good work, as it reſpected new inſtances of conviction and converſion; alſo reſpecting ſome who had been ſolemnly impreſſed in mind concerning the ſtate of their ſouls. It is to be feared that ſome of theſe have in a degree loſt their impreſſions, and remain deſtitute of any evidence that they are at peace with God. Should they continue impenitent, and return to a ſtate of mind void of all conviction, the proſpect before them muſt be very gloomy indeed.

We truſt, however, that God has not wholly departed from us, relative to the influences of his Holy Spirit on the minds of numbers among us. In the ſpace of a few months paſt, a few new caſes of awakening have appeared, and ſome of theſe do entertain a belief that they have become truly friendly to God.

Our public aſſemblies ſtill appear attentive and ſolemn in time of worſhip: and a goodly number continue to manifeſt a delight in the religion and kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt.

It will, probably, be expected, that ſome account be given of the nature of this work in the effect produced in the views and exerciſes of thoſe who have been the ſubjects of it. This will now be attempted. It appears, in general, that the firſt impreſſions on the minds of the awakened, were a ſenſe of the dangerous ſtate they were in on account of their ſinful lives. This view of themſelves is ſoon followed with a conviction of ſin, being of the nature of oppoſition to God in his character and government. In ſome, this conviction is much clearer than in others. The moſt of them expreſs a ſenſe of their entire moral depravity; that they have been, not only deſtitute of any right exerciſes of heart, but have been wholly ſelfiſh in all their feelings and conduct. With this view of themſelves, they ſee it would be juſt for God to execute upon them the penalty of the divine law, and they often expreſs their aſtoniſhment that he hath not done it already. This conviction of ſin, in a great degree, ſilences the objections againſt the doctrines of divine ſovereignty, which are commonly made by unconvinced ſinners.

There has appeared a difference as to the duration of conviction in different perſons, before they obtain relief; ſome obtaining it much ſooner than others. A difference, alſo, reſpecting

terror

terror and diſtreſs of mind. On theſe accounts, ſome who are ſenſible of an alteration in the exerciſes of their minds, have been ready to doubt of their being of the right kind. For they ſuppoſe ſuch great ſinners as they have been, muſt have greater terror, clearer convictions, and of longer continuance, than they have been the ſubjects of.

Thoſe who have given evidence that they have become new creatures in Chriſt, expreſs a willingneſs to be in the hands of a ſovereign God: a delight in his character and government, an approbation of Chriſt as held up in the goſpel, and truſt in him, as an altogether ſuitable Saviour for ſuch ſinners, as they ſee themſelves to be. Such exerciſes as theſe are accompanied with a peculiar delight in the ſociety and religious converſation of thoſe, whom they eſteem as friends to Chriſt. They alſo manifeſt a great delight in the word and worſhip of God, eſteeming that preaching the moſt deſirable, which is the moſt ſearching. In private converſation, they expreſs a great deſire of knowing what are the diſtinguiſhing traits between a true Chriſtian, and an hypocrite. The more they attend to themſelves, in the light of divine truth, the greater diſcovery they make of the vileneſs of their hearts. And this diſcovery often occaſions fears leſt they have been deceived concerning their hope of being reconciled to God. But theſe fears are often ſucceeded with increaſing deſires after conformity to God, and a greater delight in his ſervice.

Whether *all*, or *any* of thoſe among us, who lately entertain a hope that they are born of God, have really experienced that important change, will fully appear hereafter But when we ſee thoſe who have been thoughtleſs about religion, vain and worldly in their tempers and lives, become thoughtful about their ſouls, convinced of ſin, and manifeſting friendſhip to Chriſt and his cauſe; muſt we not conclude that this is the work of the Holy Spirit, who, when he comes, convinces ſinners of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment? In this way God increaſes the number of his friends, counteracts the influence of deluſion and wickedneſs, and manifeſts the riches of his grace, in his kindneſs to penitent ſinners, through Chriſt Jeſus. In view of ſuch a diſcovery of the glorious God, true ſaints rejoice, and give him the praiſe. It becomes all who have named the name of Chriſt, carefully to depart from iniquity, and to ſtand faſt in the Lord. In this way they will pleaſe God, exhibit evidence of being real diſciples of Chriſt, and enjoy a comfortable hope of appearing with Chriſt in glory.

That God would revive his work, by the extenſive ſpread of the goſpel in the world, by the converſion of ſinners to true holineſs, and by building up his church in goſpel love and harmo-

ny,

ny, is doubtleſs the daily prayer of all the friends of Zion. And He, who hears prayer, will, in his own time, give gracious anſwers of peace.

JOHN CLEAVELAND.

Wrentham, January 15, 1806.

Extract from a letter from Little Compton, in Rhode Iſland, dated Feb. 1806.

THE Lord is cauſing us to realize, in ſome meaſure, what we have been praying for in times paſt. The attention of all claſſes is called to the important concern of their ſouls; numbers are burdened with a ſenſe of their ſins; ſome have hopefully been brought into the liberty of the goſpel; many of our *moral* profeſſors have been made to fear and tremble, in view of their loſt condition; ſome who have been oppoſed to the truth have become new creatures, and ſpeak a new language; eight perſons have been propounded for admiſſion into the church, and numbers it is expected will come forth on the Lord's ſide; we hope forty or fifty. We had two meetings every day laſt week, except Saturday; they were full and attentive. From what we have learnt the work is progreſſing in different parts of the town. In an adjoining town the labours of Mr. D. have been bleſſed. Ten perſons ſtand propounded to join the church. We wiſh for a remembrance in your prayers, that God would continue his work among us. I am, in great haſte, yours, &c.

N. B. Since the Editors received the above, they have had the pleaſing information that the good work increaſes in that favoured town.

POETRY.

THE PROMISED LAND.

ON Jordan's rugged banks I ſtand,
And caſt a wiſhful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my poſſeſſions lie.

O the

O the tranſporting, rapt'rous ſcene,
That riſes to my ſight!
Sweet fields array'd in living green,
And rivers of delight.

There gen'rous fruits that never fail,
On trees immortal grow;
There rocks, and hills, and brooks, and vales,
With milk and honey flow.

O'er all theſe wide extended plains
Shines one eternal day;
There God, the Sun, forever reigns,
And ſcatters night away.

No chilling winds, or poiſ'nous breath,
Can reach that healthful ſhore:
Sickneſs and ſorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and fear'd no more.

When ſhall I reach that happy place,
And be forever bleſt?
When ſhall I ſee my Father's face,
And in his boſom reſt?

Fill'd with delight, my raptur'd ſoul
Can here ho longer ſtay:
Tho' Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearleſs I'd launch away.

DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY.

From a Friend - - - - - - - - - - - DOLLS. 100 —
From a Lady in Marblehead, by Rev. Mr. May, 5 —

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